

December 30, 2009 - "Source of Pride": Academy Students, Hopefuls Honored

Tribune Democrat

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"Source of pride": Academy students, hopefuls honored

By PATRICK BUCHNOWSKI

December 30, 2009

JOHNSTOWN — Some of the area's finest students were honored Tuesday afternoon at the Holiday Inn in downtown Johnstown.

The annual gathering, hosted by U.S. Rep. John Murtha, D-Johnstown, was for students in the 12th Congressional District who are enrolled in or nominated for one of the nation's military academies.

With his wife beside him, Murtha stood before young men and women in uniform and expressed pride in their achievements.

"Joyce and I are so proud of all the work you've done," Murtha said.

"This is the greatest country in the world. I'm so proud to have represented this district for so long."

Murtha is a former Marine who is serving his 19th term in Congress.

About 115 people, including 21 cadets and midshipmen and 16 nominees, attended the reception.

They had a chance to have their picture taken with the congressman.

Cadet Ian Miscoe, 20, of Westmont, is in his third year at the U.S. Military Academy, also known as West Point, in New York's Hudson Valley region.

Miscoe's father, Frederic Miscoe, is a retired lieutenant colonel. And his uncle, Indian Lake Mayor Michael Miscoe, graduated from West Point in 1985. The younger Miscoe is following the family legacy.

"Because I come from a military family, I tell people it was harder to persuade me not to get into the military," said Miscoe, a Westmont Hilltop graduate.

"It's a great opportunity," he said.

"It allows young people to get regimented into a certain lifestyle that's unparalleled to anything you can do after high school."

U.S. Naval Academy Midshipman 3rd Class Kara Yingling said her elder sister, Shannon, is a senior at the academy in Annapolis, Md.

Yingling, 20, said her sister has been influential in her life. But she added that it was her decision to pursue a military career.

"I know a lot of people who say, 'You're following in your sister's footsteps,'" the Westmont resident and Bishop McCort graduate said. "But for me, it's just about making my own way."

After graduation, Yingling may enter the Marine Corps.

August Airsman, 17, of Jennerstown, is hoping to enter the Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs, Colo. He is awaiting an acceptance letter.

"I decided to attempt to get into the military academy because I feel it's the

best way I can properly serve my country," he said.

Airman said he is interested in designing propulsion, energy and weapons systems.

State Rep. Frank Burns, D-East Taylor, and Cambria County Commissioner P.J. Stevens also were on hand.

"What is gathered here is the area's best and brightest," Stevens said.

"They're a source of pride for their families, their schools and ultimately for the entire community."